

**A STUDY ON PERSONALITY OF OSWALD ALVING REFLECTED IN  
HENRIK IBSEN'S *GHOSTS* PLAY (1881):  
A PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE**



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**Proposed by:**

**HERU IRIYANTO**  
**A320110091**

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA  
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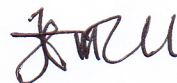
NIM : A320110091

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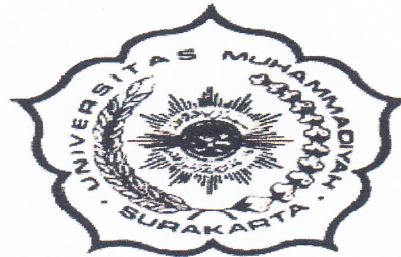
Fax. 715448 Surakarta 57102

Website: <http://www.ums.ac.id>

Email: [ums@ums.ac.id](mailto:ums@ums.ac.id)

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**HERU IRIYANTO**  
A320110091

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Surakarta, Juni 2015

**First Consultant**

**(Dr. Phil. Dewi Chandraningrum, M. Ed)**

**NIK. 772**

**Second Consultant**

**(Drs. Abdillah Nugroho, M.Hum.)**

**NIK. 589**

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by:

- 1. Heru Iriyanto**
- 2. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum**
- 3. Abdillah Nugroho**

**ABSTRACT**

**HERU IRIYANTO. A320110091. A STUDY ON PERSONALITY OF OSWALD ALVING REFLECTED IN HENRIK IBSEN'S *GHOSTS* PLAY (1881):A PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE. Research Paper.School of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. June, 2015.**

The problem of this study is “How is the the personality of Oswald Alving reflected in Henrik Ibsen’s *Ghosts* play?”. The objective of this study to analyze *Ghosts* based on Structural analysis and the to analyze *Ghosts* play based on Psychoanalytic perspective.

The researcher employed qualitative method. The researcher used two data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source is about The primary data sources is the textplay itself. Then, the secondary data sources are from other sources such as essay, articles, biography of Henrik Ibsen, Internet and other relevant information.The method of data collection is library research and the technique of data anaylisis is descriptive technique.

Based on the anaylisis, the researcher got some conclusions. The study shows that the problem faced by the minor character is his own frustation and psychological condition. Oswald is presented by Henrik Ibsen, the author of *Ghosts* . Oswald is from Norway but lives in Paris. Oswald’s is an artist, because he fearing that his exuberance and creativity would dissipate like that his father, he wanted to leave his home in Norway and he wanted to stay in Paris with Regina. The mistake is Oswald’s live as an artist that caused him trapped in drugs abuse, alcohol, and having free sex. The joy of life as an artist in Paris and from his father make him infected syphilis. The three words *Id*, *Ego* and *Superego* will be used in the Oswald Alving’s structure of personality.

## A. Introduction

According in Purwanto (2010; 141), Ellis define that attitude involve some knowledge of situation. However, the essential aspect of the attitude is found in the fact that some characteristic feeling or emotion is experienced, and as we would accordingly expect, some definite tendency to action is associated. G.W. Allport a psychologists in Purwanto (2010;141), said that traits are dynamic and flexible dispositions, resulting, at least in part, from the integration of specific habits, expressing characteristic modes of adaption to one's surroundings.

Literary work has a close relationship with human life. One of literary works is play. In reading a play, the obvious features can be easily spotted by the theme, characters, plot, and any others of structural elements that greatly influence how the play is perceived by the reader. Literature shows the feelings and opinion to the public. Literature also one of main avenue and quantity of material that give information about human life in all time period, region, classes and races.

A psychologist expert, Hilgard (1962: 498) says that frustrating event is one in which goal directed activity is blocked, slowed up, or otherwise interfered with. Frustration is also analyzed in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory. According to Freud in Lundin (1969:18), frustration is anything that prevented a painful or uncomfortable excitation within the personality from being relieved pleasure principle, the goal of the id, is denied. According Freud in Newman (1983: 385) described three components of personality; the *id*, the *ego*, and the *superego*. These systems are interacted each other in order to organize human behavior.

Henrik Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828 in the small port town of Skien, Norway. He was the child of a merchant family and suffered hardships in his youth when his father had to give up the family business. At the age of 15, Ibsen left home to become the apprentice to a pharmacist and began writing plays the first of which, *Catiline*, was published under the

pseudonym Brynjolf Bjarme. *Catiline* was soon followed by *The Burial Mound*, Ibsen's first play to be produced.

Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) was the Norwegian dramatist and social critic who fought fearlessly for women's rights. He is the father of modern drama. He is the one who rightly introduced Realism in the world of literature. He did care a lot about individuality and individual rights. Lyons describes him as "the realist, the iconoclast, the successful or failed idealist, the poet, the psychologist, the romantic, the antiromantic." (Quoted in Suleiman, 2011: 5)

In 1851, Ibsen moved to Bergen, Norway to become an assistant at the Norske Teater, where he wrote and directed plays for the theatre. In 1857, Ibsen became artistic director of The Norwegian Theatre in Christiania (now Oslo), Norway. He subsequently married Suzannah Thoreson, and they had one son named Sigurd. However, The Norwegian Theatre's bankruptcy in 1862, a series of disappointments with Norwegian politics and an unsuccessful writing career led Ibsen to move his entire family to Italy. He continued to write plays with environments that were much more like Norway's wet climate than the sunny Mediterranean Italy.

In 1865, he published what is considered his first major work, *Brand*. This play was a great Norwegian success and earned him a state stipend and financial stability. His success continued with *Peer Gynt*, a fantastical verse drama featuring music composed by Edvard Grieg.

In 1868, Ibsen and his family moved to Germany, where they lived for many years while Ibsen wrote the bulk of his major works. Ibsen was greatly influenced by his mother-in-law, Magdalene Thoreson, who was a leader of the feminist movement in Norway. Many of his plays contain criticisms of marriage, portraying dominant, complex female characters who are trapped by the constraints of strict Victorian traditions. Plays in this vein include *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881) and *Hedda Gabler* (1890.) His plays were often controversial, covering taboo subjects in overt or less explicit ways. *Ghosts* stirred considerable public outcry for its depiction of

sypilis. In 1882, Ibsen wrote *An Enemy of the People*, partly in response to the public outcry against *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*.

Ibsen's later plays represented a transition from his realistic social dramas to more symbolic and psychological dramas. These plays include *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Rosmersholm* (1886) and *The Lady from the Sea* (1888). As Ibsen's successful dramatic career continued, he became a celebrated figure in Europe. A long black coat and white muttonchops became Ibsen's signature and a frequent subject of caricatures. In 1900, Ibsen suffered his first stroke, which ended his writing career. After his death in 1906, a large funeral procession was mounted in his honor at the expense of the Norwegian government.

Ibsen is known as the "Father of Modern Drama." His plays pioneered realistic dialogue and characters with psychological depth on the stage, and gave birth to the modern movement in drama. Ibsen is also heralded as the greatest Norwegian author of all time, and he is considered to be the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare.

*Ghosts* is a realist drama written in 19th century Norway. The social context of this time meant his play was seen as a radical piece and theaters often refused to play it. This is due to the boundaries of class and gender which are constantly challenged throughout this play, in both a historical and modern context. In respect to class, this is achieved primarily through the use of characterization and a fundamental theme of deceit, especially, the juxtaposition between different classes. Pennington and Unwin (2004: 39) have the following opinion on Ibsen's *Ghosts* "the action of the play is a slow unveiling of the truth. If the central theme of Ibsen's work is how to be true to yourself, in *Ghosts* he shows the pain of that pursuit".

*Ghosts* tells the story of Mrs. Alving and her son, Oswald. Mrs. Helene Alving is the widow of Captain Alving, late Court Chamberlain, of Rosenvold – a man of high esteem in the community. The marriage was an unhappy one for Mrs. Alving, but she did everything in her power to conceal

the fact that her husband was an alcoholic who lived a depraved life at the manor. Mrs. Alving sent her son, Oswald, away at age seven to protect him from the polluting influence of his father, who also had an illegitimate daughter by a servant. This daughter, Regina, was brought up by the carpenter Engstrand and now works in Mrs. Alving's house. Manders, a clergyman in charge of the financing of the home, has also come for the opening. When young, Mrs. Alving was in love with Manders and wanted to leave her husband for him, but Manders rejected her and sent her home.

The night before the ceremony the home in memory of Captain Alving burns down. Manders has insisted that the home should not be insured, and now he is afraid for his reputation as a clergyman and financial manager. He comes to a secret agreement with Engstrand, by which the latter takes the blame for the fire and in return funds for running the home are to be invested in Engstrand's projected "sailors' home" in the town.

Oswald tells his mother that he is suffering from syphilis, which he thinks he has contracted as a result of his bohemian life in Paris. He is afraid of becoming a helpless invalid, and hopes that Regine will be willing to help him to take an over-dose of morphine in the last stage of his illness. But when Regine realizes that he is ill, and in fact is her step-brother, she leaves Rosenlund to make her own way in the town. Mrs. Alving tells Oswald of his father's true nature, and that he has inherited the disease from his father. It is now up to her to decide whether she is willing to help her son by giving him the over-dose of morphine. The play ends as the sun rises and Oswald has succumbed to the last stage of his illness.

From the explanation above, the researcher is really interested in analyzing the personality of Oswald in *Ghosts* play. The study will be analyzed by using psychoanalytic theory. So, the researcher entitles this research **A STUDY ON PERSONALITY OF OSVALD ALVING REFLECTED AT HENRIK IBSEN'S *GHOSTS* PLAY (1881): A PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE.**



## **B. Research Method**

In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative research. It is a library research while data sources need literary data. This kind of research has purpose to analyze literature using a psychoanalytic approach approach. There are some steps to conduct the research. They are: (1) determining the type of the study (2) determining the object of the study (3) determining data and data source (4) determining technique of data collection, and (5) determining technique of data analysis.

The object of the study is The objective of this study to analyze *Ghosts* based on Structural analysis and the to analyze *Ghosts* play based on Psychoanalytic perspective. There are two data sources which are needed to conduct this research. They are primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data sources is the textplay itself. The data involve dialogues, characters, action, and the whole narration, which are relevant to the subject matter of this research. Then, the secondary data sources are from other sources such as essay, articles, biography of Henrik Ibsen, Internet and other relevant information. The method of data collection is library research and the technique of data collection is descriptive technique. In conducting the study, The researcher uses the techniques in collecting the data as follows: (a) Reading the original novel *Ghosts* several times (b) Determining the characters of novel (c) Taking notes of important things for both of primary and secondary data source (d) Classifying data by determining the relevant data.

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. The steps which it taken by the researcher in analyzing the data are as follows: the first is analyzing the data based on its characters and structural elements. Focus will be paid on the character and the structural of analysis of the novel. The second step is analyzing the data based on psychoanalitic approach.

## C. Finding and Discussion

Oswald Alving although important in the *Ghosts* play, is a minor character and represents the doomed product of a diseased society. Artistically gifted by having inherited his father's "joy of life" he finds he cannot work at home where the "sun" of self-expression is obscured by the "fog" of duty and social appearances. The three words *Id*, *Ego* and *Superego* will be used in the Oswald Alving's structure of personality.

### 1. The *Id*

The *id* is the basic system of personality to satisfy the need wished by the human. *Id* works with pleasure principle. According to Hall (1980: 29), the purpose of pleasure principle is to make someone free from stress or at least reducing stress.

Oswald Alving is a young artist. Artistically gifted by having inherited his father's "joy of life" he finds he cannot work at home where the "sun" of self-expression is obscured by the "fog" of duty and social appearances. "joy of life" as a young artist made him infected with syphilis. It made Oswald feel deadly fear.

### 2. The *Ego*

The *ego*, unlike the *id*, functions according to the reality principle (Boeree, <http://www.ship.edu/html>). Its function is to decide what to do by considering in both *Id* and *Superego*.

The *Id* has controlled Oswald's *ego*. He does not care with the rules and the norms that he should obey. What is on his mind is only the way to amuse her and the way to be happier.

He is an artist, because culture in Norway not support he want move and live in Paris, but the mistake is Oswald's live as an artist that caused him trapped in drugs abuse, alcohol, and having free sex.

Oswald Fearing that his exuberance and creativity would dissipate like that his father. It means that Norway is an unpleasant memory for him.

So, he wants to leave home in Norway and he wants live in paris with Regina as an artist.

According Oswald Alving that live as an artist not always negative like some people think. So, he want decided to be an artist although he Fearing that his exuberance and creativity would dissipate.

Culture in Norway not supportOswald Alving that live as an artist.He Fearing that his exuberance and creativity would dissipate like that his father. Under these circumstances, he wants to leave home in Norway and he wants live in paris with Regina.

### 3. **The *Superego***

Hall states that “*superego* is morality element branch of justice from personal system; *superego* is the internal representative of traditional values and evaluative norms” (Hall, 1988:35).

Oswald’s *superego* does not give a lot of influence to the *ego*. It causes the *ego* to often abandon his *superego*’s warning. The position of *superego* in Oswald’s mind takes role when Oswald felt something forbid her to do the bad things but he never knew what that was.

Oswald’s *Superego* has been ignored because of him passion to be happy and having a good time everyday in her life. However, *superego* shows very little role in the novel.

### **D. Conclusion**

The researcher deduces several conclusions after analyzing *Ghosts* using psychoanalytic approach. First, the structural analysis of this *Ghosts* consisted of character and characterization, setting, plot, point of view, style, and theme related solid unity. *Ghosts* is 3 act play with jumping conflict plot. The plot is up and down. Kennedy, 1993:3). The complication is Oswald is sick. Mrs. Alving comes to understand that Oswald is seriously ill with the same disease that afflicted her husband. Climax in *Ghosts* play is when the monument dedicate to Mr. Alving on Fire. The suspense is when Regina leaves Miss. Alving’s house, and with her Oswald's last chance to spare his mother a horrible request. His health is disintegrating and he wants her to put

him to death. Miss. Alving agrees, but doesn't believe the end will come soon. The resolution is Mrs. Alving calls Oswald's attention to the sun breaking over the fjord. She promises to give him everything he wants, and continues to treat him like a little boy. The conclusion is Mrs. Alving stands holding the morphine. Now she's faced with the choice of killing him as he's requested and giving up her last ghost, or nursing him.

. Henrik Ibsen himself was an iconoclast, meaning he freely expressed his rejection of accepted ideas and institutions. His spokesperson here is Oswald, a non-conformist and an artist struggling to defend his identity in the hostile, judgmental environment of his home. Oswald is a straight shooter. While Pastor Manders and Mrs. Alving often beat politely around the bush, Oswald says what he means.

Second, based on the psychoanalytic analysis that it can be concluded that in *Ghosts* by Henrik Ibsen there is an illustration of a psychological phenomenon in which the character has internal and external experiences conflicts. He showed the conflict by creating named Oswald, Pastor Manders and Mrs. Alving character.

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